



Director of
Central

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EL SALVADOR:

Military Developments

(b)(1)

(b)(3) NatSecAct

The recent Army offensive against the guerrilla logistic network has disrupted rebel resupply efforts, but it also revealed continuing operational problems that preclude an early defeat of the insurgents. (S NF)

[redacted] the two-week offensive, which ended on Friday, was hampered at times by poor security and by breakdowns in command and control. Furthermore, resources for the nationwide operation occasionally were stretched too thin, exposing some units to easy ambush. Overall, the operation netted small quantities of arms and ammunition at the cost of some 40 casualties. (S NF)

A communications failure delayed reinforcements to a government unit ambushed in Chalatenango Department; nine men were hit and 22 taken prisoner. The commanding officer, Colonel Ochoa, later apparently ignored orders not to pursue the guerrilla force responsible for the attack. (C NF)

Comment: The Army still lacks sufficient forces and leadership to end the war soon, but it clearly retains the upper hand in its battle with the insurgents. The just-completed operation probably will complicate guerrilla supply difficulties. (S NF)

The ambush of Ochoa's troops was the third in recent months. The guerrillas probably hope to provoke Ochoa—who is known for his aggressiveness—into retaliating with a repressive campaign that would antagonize the local population and damage the improving reputation of the armed forces. (S NF) ~~-CIA, DIA, NSA~~